AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims:

1-9.   (Canceled)

10.   (Currently amended) The method according to <u>claim</u> 45, wherein said antibody is a monoclonal antibody.

11.   (Previously presented) The method according to claim 45, wherein said antibody includes a detectable label.

12.   (Previously presented) The method according to claim 45, wherein said neoplastic disease is selected from the group consisting of malignant melanoma, breast ductal carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma, prostate cancer and endometrial cancer.

13.   (Previously presented) The method according to claim 46, wherein said sample is a human tissue sample.

14-40. (Canceled)

41.   (Previously presented) The method according to claim 46, wherein said sample comprises a lymph node.

42-44. (Canceled)

45.   (Previously presented) A method of diagnosing growth characteristics of a neoplastic disease in an organism, the method comprising:

(a) contacting a sample from an organism with a neoplastic disease with an antibody that specifically binds VEGF-D;

(b) measuring amount of unprocessed VEGF-D polypeptide having a molecular weight of ~53 K in said sample; and

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(c) diagnosing growth characteristics of the neoplastic disease from the amount of the VEGF-D having a molecular weight of ~53 K measured in step (b), wherein increased unprocessed VEGF-D having a molecular weight of ~53 K in said sample correlates with increased tumor growth or metastatic risk.

46. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 45, wherein said sample is selected from the group consisting of tissue, blood, serum, plasma, urine, ascities fluid and pleural effusion.

47. (Previously presented) The method according to claim 46, wherein said sample comprises endothelial cells.

48. (Previously presented) A method of diagnosing growth characteristics of a tumor in an organism, the method comprising:

(a) contacting a tumor sample from the organism with an antibody that specifically binds VEGF-D;

(b) measuring amount of unprocessed VEGF-D polypeptide having a molecular weight of ~53 K in said sample; and

(c) diagnosing growth characteristics of the neoplastic disease from the amount of the VEGF-D having a molecular weight of ~53 K measured in step (b), wherein increased unprocessed VEGF-D having a molecular weight of ~53 K in said sample correlates with increased tumor growth or metastatic risk.

49. (Previously presented) The method of claim 48, wherein the antibody is a monoclonal antibody.

50. (Currently amended) The method of claim 48, wherein the antibody includes a detectable label.